NEW HOME FOR ONE ASEAN ONE RESPONSE

BRIEFING ON THE AHA CENTRE WORK PLAN 2020 AND INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW AHA CENTRE’S EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE

ASEAN-UN JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT

GET TO KNOW: THE ASEAN COMMITTEE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT (ACDM)
New Home of One ASEAN One Response

The AHA Centre also welcomed the visit of the World Vision International to the AHA Centre, Ms. Adelina Kamal (left).

The AHA Centre also hosted the visit of Mr. Oliver Lacey-Hall, Head of the United Nations OCHA Liaison Office with ASEAN in Jakarta. He will be sharing his experiences and outlook regarding disaster management. ASEAN-UN partnership and of course, the much anticipated – Dynamic Simplicity.

Lastly, we are always open to suggestions, comments or anything you wish to share with us. You know the drill? Drop us an email to comm@ahacentre.org and we’ll do us. You know the drill right? Drop us an email to comm@ahacentre.org and we’ll do us. You know the drill right? Drop us an email to comm@ahacentre.org and we’ll do us. You know the drill right? Drop us an email to comm@ahacentre.org and we’ll do us. You know the drill right? Drop us an email to comm@ahacentre.org and we’ll do us. You know the drill right? Drop us an email to comm@ahacentre.org and we’ll do us. You know the drill right? Drop us an email to comm@ahacentre.org and we’ll do us. You know the drill right? Drop us an email to comm@ahacentre.org and we’ll do us. You know the drill right? Drop us an email to comm@ahacentre.org and we’ll do us. You know the drill right? Drop us an email to comm@ahacentre.org and we’ll do us. You know the drill right? Drop us an email to comm@ahacentre.org and we’ll do us. 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EU will commemorate 40th year anniversary of dialogue relations this year. AHA Centre's Governing Board participated in the discussion. ASEAN and held earlier that day. The EU Ambassador to ASEAN and members of the European Union (EU) under the AHA Centre Work Plan 2020 was also present.

A discussion regarding future collaboration between the AHA Centre and the Government of Japan supported the AHA Centre (EOC) and the operational systems used by the AHA Centre in monitoring and responding to disasters. The Government of Japan introduced the AHA Centre's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and was received by Mr. Arnel Capili, AHA Centre’s Director of Operations, Deputy Director-General of Social Welfare and Manpower Development, and Ms. Adinda Kamal, Acting Executive Director of the AHA Centre (right)

The cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations (UN) on disaster management commenced in 2004. Guided by the AADMER Work Programme (2010-2015), the ACDM and the UN decided to articulate the collaboration through the AHA-UN Joint Strategic Plan of Action on Disaster Management (JSAPDM) in 2012. The current version of the JSAPDM, which is the third iteration, outlines ASEAN and the UN’s mutual intentions and commitments to continue working together, guided by the AADMER Work Programme 2016-2020 and the AHA Vision 2025 on Disaster Management.

The AADMER Work Programme identifies eight (8) Priority Programmes, and each of the Priority Programmes is supported by various UN agencies. In order to facilitate a single point of contact for each of the Priority Programmes, the UN has assigned a lead UN agency to coordinate UN’s support and inputs for each Priority Programme and to work with the AHA Centre’s operational counterpart. For example, UN OCHA serves as the lead UN agency for Knowledge and Innovation Management (KIM) and will coordinate UN’s inputs for the AADMER Priority Programme no. 8 on Lead (i.e. ASEAN Leadership for Excellence and Innovation in Disaster Management) and work with the AHA Centre as the ASEAN’s operational counterpart.

The Heads of the National Disaster Management Offices (NDMOs) of the ASEAN Member States (AMS) serve as the Focal Points of the AASEAN Joint Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM). The ACDM also serves as the Governing Board of the AHA Centre. The ACDM is the driving force behind the creation and the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER). The ACDM is also the founding fathers of the AHA Centre.

In this edition of The Columns, we would like to introduce the Heads of the NDMOs of the ASEAN Member States to provide our readers with information on how the NDMOs play a pivotal role in the disaster management cooperation in ASEAN.
Mr. Oliver Lacey-Hall
Head of United Nations OCHA Liaison Office
with ASEAN, in Jakarta

From a very young age, Mr. Oliver Lacey-Hall has worked on humanitarian issues. Over 30 years of experience in this field has helped him to be a passionate and enthusiastic leader who constantly emits sincerity in all that he does. Through this month's edition of The Other Side, Mr. Oliver Lacey-Hall, Head of UNOCHA’s Liaison Office with ASEAN, based in Jakarta, inspired The Column with his thought-provoking and encouraging sharing of experience.

“I do not think the job is ever done, because the world is an imperfect and evolving place, in a constant state of unrelenting change. Often people are scared of change, and sometimes change drives conflict, and people react to that. So as long as the change goes on, the world will continue to be imperfect.

What the UN aims to do is to support Member States and other actors to ensure international peace and security to the extent that is possible. This is an endless process, subject to change as much as anything else is. We, as humanitarian actors, need to be ready for these changes, to adapt our approach to delivery of humanitarian assistance accordingly.

The partnership between OCHA and ASEAN is also a manifestation of the dynamic simplicity model. You have been to many places in the world to do your job, from which I may say, your personal passion in the humanitarian field is apparent. Do you ever feel like the job is done? Or do you wish to have another opportunity to do the job differently in the future?

Please tell us something about the term ‘dynamic simplicity’?

It started in a meeting in Singapore now more than 5 years ago, when one of the participants asked a question regarding the legal status of the relationship between OCHA and the AHA Centre. And Mr. Said Faisal, former of Executive Director of the AHA Centre answered: “we do not yet have those documents, because we have agreed that it is better for us to first figure out how we work together and then to write it down, rather than the other way around.”

So, dynamic simplicity is basically about doing something that, if it goes well, you write it down. If it goes badly, you do not write it down and you test other methods to do it until you succeed, and then you write it down. That is why, over these five years of partnership between the AHA Centre and OCHA, we do not have any kind of memorandum of understanding between us. This means that we provide each other with constructive and honest feedback after exercises and every response that we are involved in and we use that as the basis of our learning. At the institutional level the UN and ASEAN have an Agreement on Comprehensive Partnership between the two organisations, which we use as the general framework for our engagement but for the operational engagement we use the ‘dynamic simplicity’ model.

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The partnership between OCHA and ASEAN is also a manifestation of change – where we see a very different approach to the one that was in place in the ASEAN region even five years ago. Five years from now it will be different once again – and probably in ways that we cannot even guess at right now. My hope is that this change will encompass ASEAN’s engagement in a broader range of humanitarian issues than the current focus on, primarily, disaster management.

My enthusiasm for my work is also rooted in who I work with and in this context engaging with ASEAN, whether the AHA Centre, Secretariat or ACDM, fuels my enthusiasm as I see the commitment of ASEAN friends to develop ASEAN’s capacity. It is amazing to see how far the ASEAN Member States have evolved within the past years, especially in the disaster management field. But I also worry, and specifically that those people who are involved in disaster management in this region, and those who control the purse strings do not always share common goals or objectives. Investment in insuring ASEAN against future threats needs to be higher on the political and financial agenda amongst ASEAN Member States; making sure ASEAN’s humanitarian instruments, and particularly the AHA Centre, are ready to address future threats is key.

When a leader such as yourself speak in the public, you spark the inner passion that you have in order for us as humanitarian officers to do better, or even just to remind ourselves that what we are doing now is about helping people. What would be your important points for us who wish to follow your professional path in this field to have the same dedication and passion that you have?

You need to know your business – take time to really study the area of work that you are involved in. Humanitarian work, by its very definition is complex, complicated, and difficult……and highly political. Our job is more often than not to navigate the politics in order to do our job – deliver assistance and protection to people in need. Recognising this reality is perhaps the most essential thing any humanitarian worker can do.

It is interesting that you brought up the communication aspect. I think I communicate the way I communicate because I am enthusiastic about my work. I believe that OCHA adds value to international humanitarian action and that, here in the ASEAN region, we have a significant role to play in engaging with you for the furtherance of the ASEAN humanitarian project – and I mean “humanitarian” in its broadest sense.

And my final thought would be that in the humanitarian world, no matter how bad the situation is, you have to believe that you will and can make a difference, and you have to be able to communicate that you believe that you will and can make a difference.

How did you get into this humanitarian field?

My grandmother was the reason. I left school when I was 18 years old, then I went to off to university in England in 1981 but left after only one year, realising that I had made the wrong choice in my course of study. And one day, my wonderful but very strict grandmother told me that I had to do something instead of nothing – it was either go back to university, or find a job.

At that time, the Vietnamese boat people crisis was at its height and the United Kingdom was receiving many thousands of people from the camps in SE Asia. These people were processed in reception centres for three to six months after they arrived for cultural orientation, language training, and waiting for availability of housing. I was 19 years old when I volunteered to help a UK non-governmental organisation in one of the reception centres in the South of England. I stayed there for three years. As I had been studying for a teaching degree, I taught English to arriving boat people.

And then I moved to that head office of the NGO just outside London. The NGO was called Oxford Venture and it was, at that time one of the three NGOs in England that handled Vietnamese refugees.

After that, I went to Hong Kong to examine the situation in the Vietnamese Boat People camps there. While I was there, I was offered a job in Hong Kong, so I thought, why not? I started working for the Save the Children Fund in Hong Kong and then moved, after a year, to join the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and I have been with the UN since then.

In relation to the multi-year partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations, if you could break it down into particular elements, what would be the formula behind the positive thrust of this partnership?

I think it has been an evolutionary process that has been carefully managed by a small group who now know each other relatively well. I think we are at the point where we need to increase and institutionalise the trust level from personal to organisational. Difficult – but essential for the long-term perspective and durability of the partnership.

As organisations we are now quite familiar with each other’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. We have a regular, open dialogue and are honest with each other about those strengths and weaknesses. My sense now is that we have both invested heavily in this relationship and that this investment is leading to positive outcomes not only for the partnership but also for the people we are here to serve. We need to keep that going – which means more honest conversations, more joint deployments, more jointly planned exercises and greater clarity on respective roles, as well as the chance to argue, disagree, negotiate and, ultimately, improve.

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The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967. The Member States of the Association are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia. As set out in the ASEAN Declaration, the aims and purposes of ASEAN among others are to accelerate the economic growth, social progress, cultural development, to promote regional peace and stability as well as to improve active collaboration and cooperation.

The AHA Centre is an inter-governmental organisation established on 17 November 2011, through the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) by ASEAN Foreign Ministers, witnessed by the ASEAN Heads of State / Government from 10 ASEAN Member States: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The Centre was set-up to facilitate the cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States and with the United Nations and international organisations for disaster management and emergency response in the ASEAN region.

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) is a legally-binding regional policy framework for cooperation, coordination, technical assistance and resource mobilisation in all aspects of disaster management in the 10 ASEAN Member States. The objective of AADMER is to provide an effective mechanism to achieve substantial reduction of disaster losses in lives and in social, economic and environmental assets, and to jointly respond to emergencies through concerted national efforts.

**Talk To Us:**

- **URL**  www.ahacentre.org
- **@ahacentre**
- **aha centre**
- **@ahacentre**

**THE AHA CENTRE**

Graha BNPB
Jl. Pramuka Kav. 38, 13th floor
Jakarta - 13120 - INDONESIA

comm@ahacentre.org

**SUPPORTED BY:**

Japan-ASEAN Cooperation